



TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
May 24 — September 7, 2008



Collecting at

*W*interthur

Henry Francis du Pont's American Vision

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Toledo Museum of Art
2445 Monroe Street, Toledo, Ohio 43620
www.toledomuseum.org

PROGRAMS AT TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

May 24–September 7

Public Tours. Join a TMA Docent for insight into works from this extraordinary collection. For dates and times, visit www.toledomuseum.org.

Friday, May 30, 7:30 P.M.

Presentation—*Riches, Rivals, and Radicals*. Author Marjorie Schwarzer introduces you to notable American art collectors and museum founders of the 20th century. Were they motivated by money, ego, or a grander civic vision?

June 29–September 7

Hands-on Activities. Create make-and-take projects that relate to collecting and museums. For dates and times, visit www.toledomuseum.org.

July 11–September 5

Gallery Series—*Good, Better, Best: Connoisseurship & How to Make the Perfect Choice*.

Join TMA curators and staff to discover how works are acquired for our collection. Visit www.toledomuseum.org for dates, times, and topics.

Friday, July 25, 7:30 P.M.

Presentation—*Creating a Sense of Place: Art, Architecture, and Nature at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art*. Just as du Pont followed his dream, Alice Walton is creating the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Executive Director Robert G. Workman takes you behind the scenes of planning, organizing, and implementing this new museum in Arkansas.

**Saturday, September 6
10 A.M.–3 P.M.**

Heirloom Appraisal Day. Appraisers from DuMouchelle's assess objects from your collection. Limit 3 items per person. Members: \$10 for first item and \$7 for additional items; nonmembers: \$15 and \$10. Call 419-254-5771, ext. 7432, starting July 28 for reservations.

Admission to exhibition and programs is free, unless otherwise noted. TMA's presentation is supported, in part, by Sotheby's.



Ohio Arts Council



Photography by Gavin Ashworth:
figs. 2, 3, 5, 6–8, 10, and Port Royal Parlor;
by Lizzie Himmel: Winterthur Museum.
Photos courtesy Winterthur Museum

back panel: Port Royal Parlor, Winterthur Museum, and Azalea Woods

left and detail on cover: Needlework picture, Mary King, Philadelphia, 1754, Bequest of Henry Francis du Pont 1966.978

This brochure was produced by the National Gallery of Art on the occasion of the exhibition An American Vision: Henry Francis du Pont's Winterthur Museum at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC in 2002.

Winterthur Museum & Country Estate, located near Wilmington, Delaware, in the beautiful Brandywine Valley, was founded in 1951 by the great American collector Henry Francis du Pont. Set on nearly one thousand acres of rolling countryside, Winterthur has been home to du Ponts since 1837. Born on the estate in 1880, H. F. du Pont distinguished himself as an astute connoisseur and collector of American fine and decorative arts. By acquiring many of the finest and rarest items made or used in America between 1640 and 1860, he chronicled American history through the objects Americans owned. Although du Pont's collecting was driven by personal interests, he recognized the importance of building a representative collection. This exhibition presents du Pont's preferences — the greatest strengths of Winterthur's collections — in both thematic and chronological groupings: Early Settlement and Sophistication, A Passion for Rococo, East Meets West, The Arts of the Pennsylvania Germans, and American Classicism.

EARLY SETTLEMENT AND SOPHISTICATION

In 17th-century America, affluent settlers did not lack for richness and finery. Well aware of the taste and fashions in England and Europe, early colonists with means often chose to acquire for their homes objects that reflected the comforts and aesthetic style of their counterparts abroad. While valuable foreign-made objects found their way to American shores, emigré and native-born artisans also responded to the demands of prosperous settlers. Massive, carved furniture, elaborately wrought silver, and richly fashioned garments and textiles were all available. The rarity of such objects made them highly desirable to collectors, and H. F. du Pont was no exception. He sought the best examples of

fig. 1: Cupboard,
possibly made by
the Emery Shop,
probably Newbury,
Massachusetts,
1680, Bequest
of Henry Francis
du Pont 1966.1261



early American furniture, continental and British metalwork used in the colonies, and superb textiles, all of which convey the luxury of the wealthy colonial household. The great cupboard made in 1680 in Essex County, Massachusetts, for farmer and landowner Peter Woodbury (fig. 1) is representative of some of the most sophisticated furniture fashioned in 17th-century New England. With applied moldings, flanking arched panels, and bold overhanging upper section, this cupboard was a significant purchase. Presumably laden with pewter, silver, brass, china, and tin-glazed earthenwares, it would have proclaimed Woodbury's status and wealth. That few examples of cupboards of this stature survive indicates their costliness and limited production.

Silver sugar boxes were another prized form found in the American colonies. Dating from the late 17th and early 18th centuries, such boxes were often fashioned to mark important events. Only nine American examples survive, including the sugar box (fig. 2) made by Edward Winslow of Boston and presented to

fig. 2: Sugar box,
Edward Winslow,
Boston, 1702, Gift
of Henry Francis
du Pont 1959.3363



Daniel and Elizabeth Belcher Oliver upon the birth of their son in 1702. The imagery on the box represents courtly love, chivalry, marriage, and fecundity.

A PASSION FOR ROCOCO

Drawn from nature, the 18th-century rococo style derived its name from *rocaille*, a French word referring to the rocklike creations that ornamented fanciful grottoes. This style was so popularized by London cabinetmaker Thomas Chippendale and his furniture design book *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*



fig. 3: High chest,
Philadelphia,
1760–70, Gift
of Henry Francis
du Pont 1957.506

that it is now frequently referred to as the Chippendale style. Flowers, shells, trees, and land formations served to inspire the wildly creative forms that were incorporated into everything from textile patterns and chased and engraved silver tea sets to ornament on furniture and other decorative arts. A high chest owned by Michael and Miriam Gratz of Philadelphia stands as one of the most florid expressions of high-style rococo taste in pre-Revolutionary America (fig. 3). The asymmetrical shell, bold naturalistic carving, and pierced central cartouche reveal the carver's skill and understanding of rococo design. In 1930 Henry Francis du Pont acquired this high chest as well as a companion dressing table directly from Gratz descendants. In 1997 Winterthur acquired a similarly ornamented side chair from a larger set commissioned by the Gratz family — a rare instance of 18th-century seating furniture and case furniture made en suite.

Although the ornately carved frames surrounding many mid- to late-18th-century paintings often evidenced more rococo decoration than the paintings themselves, portraiture also reflected the status and taste of those who could afford this fashionable style. In 1771 noted Philadelphia artist Charles Willson Peale traveled to Maryland to execute several paintings for Edward Lloyd IV, including *The Edward Lloyd Family* (fig. 4). This rare

fig. 4: Charles Willson Peale, *The Edward Lloyd Family*, Maryland, 1771, Museum purchase 1964.124



family group portrays the Lloyds' gentility, position, and wealth through their dress and poses: Edward assumes a leisurely stance, Elizabeth plays the English guitar, and daughter Anne endearingly clasps her father's hand. Peale painted only five such family portraits.

EAST MEETS WEST

For centuries, Europeans and Americans were intrigued by the arts of the East, including luxurious silks, precious porcelains, and lacquerwares. From the 17th century, Dutch and English trading companies generated huge profits by exporting items from the East to Western markets. In addition to such objects found in colonial America, those incorporating Asian motifs and aesthetics were made domestically and in Europe, resulting in a fusion of Western craft techniques and materials with Asian inspiration. A number of how-to books written for the Western market detailed Eastern ornament and design. In 1688 English artisans John Stalker (of London) and George Parker (of Oxford) published *A Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing*, which included Eastern designs and instructions on japanning, a process in which decorative motifs are applied to wood in a style imitating Chinese and Japanese lacquerwork. Winterthur's impressive tall-case clock made in Boston by Gawen Brown is representative of japanning produced by a small number of Boston artisans in the second quarter of the 18th century (fig. 5). Attributed to engraver and japper Thomas Johnston, this clock case is a rare survival of the most complex and aesthetically pleasing japanned ornament produced in colonial America.

By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, exports shipped from India to America were almost as plentiful as those from China. "India cottons," the most sought-after commodity, were often colorfully hand-painted with tree-of-life motifs and other floral and foliate themes.

fig. 5: Tall clock, Boston, works by Gawen Brown, japanning attributed to Thomas Johnston, 1749–55, Museum purchase 1955.96.3



Large bed coverings known as palampores were especially popular, and they occasionally inspired the needlework of Americans such as Philadelphian Mary King, whose depiction of a tree of life flanked by a lion and leopard is worked in silk and metallic yarns on a silk moiré ground (see cover).

THE ARTS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS

The German-speaking people who settled in America in the 18th century brought with them a distinct set of values and aesthetic standards that permeated the material culture and society of the areas of Pennsylvania they inhabited.

Pennsylvania Germans sought to imbue their lives with color and creativity, and they incorporated these attributes into objects they owned. Chests, which provided valuable storage space, were often the most essential piece of household furniture. They were embellished with a wide variety of painted ornament—from flowers to fanciful animals such as the unicorns that adorn a chest from Berks County in southeastern Pennsylvania (fig. 6). Many *fraktur* (documents commemorating important events such as births, marriages, and deaths) were decorated with the same motifs, often tulips, hearts, and birds. Sometimes these paper records were affixed inside the lids of

fig. 6: Chest,
Berks County,
Pennsylvania,
1765–1810,
Museum purchase
955.95.1



fig. 7: Flask,
Pennsylvania, 1800,
Bequest of Henry
Francis du Pont
1960.644

fig. 8: Lion, John
Bell Sr., Waynes-
boro, Pennsylvania,
1840–65, Bequest
of Henry Francis
du Pont 1967.1630



chests, though today most have been removed. The rare surviving example inside the lid of Winterthur's unicorn chest incorporates some of the same naturalistic decoration found on the chest's painted exterior. The verses on this *fraktur* relate to betrothal and marriage, suggesting that the chest may have been a wedding gift.

Du Pont's collection of Pennsylvania German objects includes textiles, metalwork, and ceramics. Within these categories are highly decorated utilitarian objects, including door locks and fat lamps, sgraffito wares (earthenwares with incised decorative motifs) (fig. 7), and colorful imported English spatterwares (lead-glazed earthenwares). The Pennsylvania Germans also incorporated whimsy in many of their nonutilitarian objects, as shown by the toothy lion made by John Bell Sr. (fig. 8).

AMERICAN CLASSICISM

The dramatic political changes in America during the Revolutionary period are often thought to have been the impetus for changes in style and ornament that occurred as the rococo gave way to the more linear early classical style. However, early classicism began in Europe and was carried to America by fashion-conscious travelers and ambitious artisans and merchants even before the war began. European interest in classicism peaked in the 1740s as Roman and Grecian archaeological sites were excavated. The treasures unearthed inspired a revival of classical designs and ideals in the decorative arts by the mid-18th century

fig. 9: John Trumbull, *Washington at Verplanck's Point, New York, 1790*, Gift of Henry Francis du Pont 1964.2201



in Europe and by the late 18th century in America. During the early decades of the new American republic, ancient classical motifs served as models for national emblems: the Roman eagle became the central figure in the great seal of the United States, and heroes such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were often depicted in classical garb.

Although John Trumbull's 1790 painting *Washington at Verplanck's Point* depicts the great general in colonial rather than Roman garb, he nonetheless retains many qualities of the classical hero (fig. 9). Shown with his horse as he inspects his troops in New York in 1782, Washington appears strong, confident, and commanding. This depiction was described as "the most perfect extant" by George Washington Parke Custis, Martha Washington's grandson. A wide variety of such patriotic images as well as objects with specific provenances linking them with America's founding leaders were sought out and acquired by Henry Francis du Pont throughout his collecting career. He also acquired objects symbolizing national

pride, such as furniture inlaid with eagles and glassware engraved with the great seal of the United States. One of du Pont's greatest tributes to American patriots, heroes, and artisans can be seen in the assemblage of a superb New York Federal sideboard that he acquired in 1926, six matching silver tankards by patriot silversmith Paul Revere, rich Chinese export porcelain made for the American market, and a pair of English urn-shaped knife boxes owned by one of America's earliest millionaires, Elias Hasket Derby of Salem, Massachusetts (fig. 10). To complete this tour de force, in 1944 du Pont acquired Benjamin West's unfinished painting *American Commissioners of the Preliminary Peace Negotiations with Great Britain* (1783–84). These remarkable reminders of this nation's material, economic, political, and cultural heritage characterize the excellence and breadth of Henry Francis du Pont's Winterthur Museum, one of America's greatest collections.

fig. 10: Sideboard, New York, 1795–1805, and urn-shaped knife boxes, England, 1790–1800, Bequest of Henry Francis du Pont 1957.850 and 1957.853; tankards, Paul Revere, Boston, 1772, Gift of Henry Francis du Pont 1957.859





Winterthur Museum & Country Estate, the creation of Henry Francis du Pont, is a unique national treasure. Encompassing some 1,000 scenic acres north of Wilmington, Delaware, Winterthur offers a rare combination of beauty, history, art, and learning. The museum collection of early American decorative arts, the brilliantly conceived naturalistic garden, and the comprehensive research library focusing on American arts and culture are all without equal.

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- A complimentary six-month trial Winterthur membership.
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